IMPROVING ENGLISH SKILLS THROUGH THE STUDENTS' INTEREST AND LEARNING STYLE

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ABSTRACT
Effective teaching in English subjects requires a well-planned strategy to optimize student engagement. Thus, it's important to integrate students' unique learning styles and interests. However, many educators still overlook those aspects. The objective of this research is to find the way to improve English skill through application students' learning style and interest. The research method was qualitative descriptive. The participants were the twelfth-class students of Senior High School in a remote area in Tana Toraja. In the teaching-learning process, the teacher must know the best way to teach the students. One of the ways that the teacher can use it is firstly knowing students' learning style and interest. Hence, the teacher can adapt the strategy in teaching. The research uses VARK style and DISC tests. The result of this research found that the most frequently used of students' learning style and interest were reading-writing style and conscientiousness. It can be concluded that students' interest and learning style has a relation, so when the teacher teaches, they should have a strategy in teaching and also it is better when they know the students' preference of learning style and interest. On the other hand, the students have the strategy in teaching, kind, friendly. Hence, the students do not hesitate to ask the students.
Keywords: *Improving English Skills, Learning Style, Students' Interest*

INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of education is not just a choice but a fundamental necessity for human existence. It is through education that a country can enhance its capabilities and competitiveness. Investing in education is, therefore, a strategic move that reaps numerous benefits for both individuals and the nation as a whole. At the core of this educational journey lies the development of effective study habits, as learning is the cornerstone of acquiring knowledge and skills. Education stands as the paramount tool to eradicate illiteracy, addressing this issue across all age groups and backgrounds. As learners' abilities can be significantly honed through the process of education, it becomes imperative for educators to continuously refine and enhance their instructional methods. This commitment to improving teaching methodologies fosters a high-quality teaching and learning environment, further nurturing the growth and development of students. Every tertiary institution and school are dedicated to enhancing the process of learning.

In developing areas, individuals are increasingly challenged to continuously enhance their capacity in order to remain competitive. English is one of the challenges to the students in this global area. English serves as the principal and widely adopted means of communication worldwide. English, as a global language of communication, plays a pivotal role in every aspect. The importance of English as a global language of world communication, also used in scientific research, business and education, travel, tourism and entertainment and work (Rao, 2019). Hence, students should master English. In studying English or every subject, students have their own learning style.

A variety of learning styles combined with learning settings can significantly impact the academic success of students (Ha, 2021). Numerous learning style models can be recognized based on past research. These include learning style theories developed by previous studies, including Kolb, Honey and Mumford, Dund and Dund, VARK (Visual, Aural, Read or Write and Kinesthetic). Teachers can use students' learning styles as a valuable resource to tailor their teaching methods and integrate activities into their curriculum that cater to various learning preferences, ultimately ensuring the success of all students in their classroom.

In addition, it is important for teachers to pay attention to and apply students' interests and talents in the teaching process. This is because getting to know students' individual interests and talents can motivate them more effectively. When teachers integrate topics or activities that match students' interests and talents, this can strengthen their engagement in learning. Students will feel more inspired and eager to learn when they feel connected to subject matter that is relevant to their interests and talents. Furthermore, paying attention to students' interests and talents can also help in identifying their potential that may not have been revealed, so that teachers can help them develop their talents in more depth. Thus, familiarizing students' interests and talents in teaching not only increases learning motivation, but also helps students achieve their best potential. As time continues to advance, it presents increasing challenges for everyone to continually develop their capacities to stay competitive. In facing these challenges, high school students are expected to enhance their capacities through higher education. To develop their capacities, students require career guidance and motivation in preparing themselves. However,

in enhancing one's capacities, teachers are also expected to understand students' learning styles, interests and needs so that teaching methods can be more effective.

The more knowing a student's learning style and interest, the more effective teachers teach. In fact, there are many teachers who do not know the students' learning style and interest. Many schools, especially those in remote areas, still lack counseling services. In high schools in Tana Toraja, there are various areas that have internet access and those that do not have it at all. In these schools, students living in urban and semi-urban areas find it very easy to access information about their future career choices, and each school has guidance counselling teachers. However, it's different for schools located in remote areas. Therefore, the author is interested in conducting research with the research focus being to identify and analyse students' learning styles and interests as factors that can serve as a reference for students to understand their learning styles and interests, even to consider them when deciding on a major for college preparation.

Educational researchers have been interested in studying students' learning styles, and interest. The study was examined from both a quantitative and qualitative method. The following will be a review of some of the earlier studies: Ariastuti & Wahyudin (2022) in their research entitled, "Exploring Academic Performance and Learning Style of Undergraduate Students in English Education Program." The purpose of the study is to investigate undergraduate students' academic performance and how it relates to their preferred learning styles. The result of the researcher is students' performance is statistically significantly impacted by their learning style. Riad et al., (2023) conducted research entitled, "The new e-learning adaptation technique based on learner's learning style and motivation." The findings show that considering a learner's motivation score and learning style can fully meet their unique demands while also enhancing the quality of learning.

In addition, Harefa et al., (2023) in their research looked for an influence between learning interest on Integrated Science learning outcomes. The findings of the research are 1) because students are happy, interested, and highly motivated to learn, which is perceived as providing them with advantages and fulfillment; 2) because students feel at ease, understand the advantages of learning, and are aware

of the learning objectives that pique their interest and encourage learning. enhancement of learning results.

Some researchers have researched about student's learning style and interest. Both the previous researchers and the present researcher focus on investigating the students' learning style and interest. The difference between the previous researchers and the present researcher is that the present researcher focuses on integrating students' learning style and interest in the teaching process.

Student Interest

Certainly, every student has their own unique personality, and it's this individuality that adds a rich tapestry of diversity to the educational landscape. To know the students' personality, it needs a test. One psychological diagnostic technique for determining and classifying a person's personality type is the DISC test. The DISC's model was introduced by William Moulton Martson in his 1928 book, Emotion of People. Martson identified it into "primary emotions and associated behaviour responses. Nowadays, it is known as Dominance (D), Influence (I), Steadiness (S) and Conscientiousness (C).

Dominance includes direct, strong-willed, and forceful. Influence includes sociable, talkative and lively. Steadiness is gentle, accommodating, and soft-hearted, and the last is Conscientiousness that includes private, analytical and logical (Wiley, 2013). There are some general characteristics of DISC Personality Test, such as: Dominant has direct, decisive, high ego strength, problem solver, risk taker, self-starter. Influence includes enthusiastic, trusting; optimistic, persuasive, talkative, impulsive, emotional. Steadiness includes good listener, team player, possessive, steady, predictable, understanding, friendly. Compliance has accurate; analytical, conscientious; careful. fact-finder; precise, high standards; systematic. (DISC Insight, n.d.) The DISC Test may not be the latest assessment tool, but its validation and reliability remain well-preserved (Nurochim et al., 2022).

The development of careers and talents has been the subject of much research. Some researchers have focused on career development, particularly regarding the management of school guidance and counseling to determine the career interests of high school students (A Case Study at SMA Negeri 1 Majalaya and SMA Negeri 2 Majalaya, Bandung Regency). This research provides an overview and information about students' career interests (Restiany et al., 2022),

Additionally, another study is about Career Planning during the Covid-19 Pandemic for 12th-grade students at SMA Negeri 5 Semarang. This research solely focuses on providing career education for the future through virtual means using Zoom (Rahayu, 2022), The previous study with the title 'Descriptive Study on the Problems in the Implementation of Specialization and Career Services at the High School Level,' found that students still struggle with career decision-making, unclear interests, and a lack of rational future planning (Herpanda & Nirwana, 2022). In the previous research on talent and interest, researchers focused on early childhood to identify these interests and talents with the title "Identifying Student Interests and Talents from Early Ages" (Anggraini et al., 2020).

The previous research mainly focused on career development for 12th-grade students in high school, providing an overview, education, and understanding of the issues. Additionally, there was research on identifying students' interests and talents at an early age. What the author is doing is identifying students' interests and talents at the high school level. This is due to the limited access to information about interest and talent tests, especially in remote areas where students and parents may not be aware of them.

Learning Style

According to (Fleming, 2006), speaking and listening are the main ways that aural mode students learn. These students can comprehend and interpret written material when reading. When studying through charts, graph figures, and pictures, students are more likely to receive instruction in the visual method. Even so, the kinaesthetic mode tends to accept learning through actions like touch, feel, see, and listen.

The acronym for Visual, Aural, Read/Write, and Kinaesthetic is VARK. This tool helps learners assess their preferred method of learning. VARK is a questionnaire that gives consumers a profile of their preferred methods of learning. It concerns the preferences of a learner for receiving and disseminating information within an educational setting. VARK is designed to support learners in considering their preferred method of learning. It offers some guidance on how learners might learn well and which teaching strategies are best for them

METHOD

In this research, the author applied a descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative research is a systematic investigation approach rooted in specific methodological approaches, aimed at delving into social or human issues. The researcher constructs a comprehensive and multifaceted portrayal, scrutinizes textual content, provides in-depth insights, and carries out the study in an authentic, real-life environment (Creswell, 2014).

The author chose qualitative descriptive because the author describes and interprets the data and comprehensive understanding of how students feel, think, and respond to English language learning. On the other hand, the author can explain the complex relationship between interests, aptitudes, learning styles, and English language improvement. This allows the author to understand the processes underlying students' language development.

The participants of this research are all the twelfth-class students of SMA Kristen Miallo, Mappak, Tana Toraja. The author chose the place because it is one of the schools that is located in a remote area.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Learning Style

To find out the student's learning style, the author distributed the questionnaires to the 31 students. There are four different kinds of learning styles, according to (Fleming, 2006): kinaesthetic, reading-writing, auditory, and visual. The four learning styles are indicated by the researcher's examination of the questionnaire and interview responses from the students. It has been determined that a small number of students possess several learning styles. The result of the student's learning style, it can be seen by the diagram below:
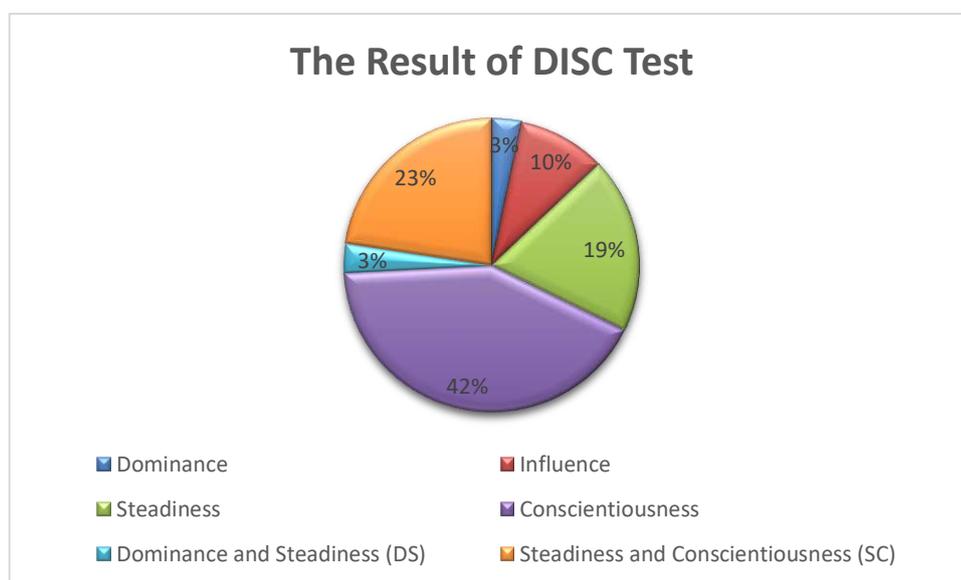
Learning Style's Diagram

Visual · Auditory · Reading-Writing · Kinaesthetic · Auditory & Reading-Writing · Auditory & Kinaesthetic
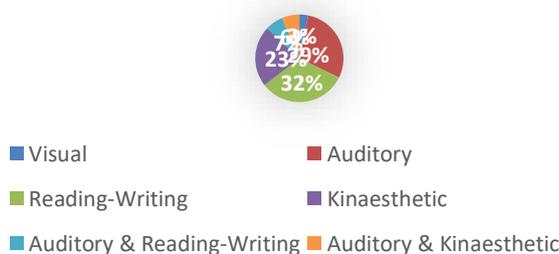
Based on the diagram above, the highest frequent learning style used by the students was the reading-writing style. It revealed that this style was also the highest-level usage with percentage 32%. Hence, reading-writing learners learn more effectively through reading and writing. Then, it was followed by auditory 29%, kinaesthetic 23%, auditory and reading-writing 7 %, auditory and kinaesthetic 6 % and visual 3 %. Therefore, specifically, it found that the students indicate a preference for more reading-writing and auditory.

Students' Interest

To find out the students' interest, the author used the DISC Test. The DISC Test consists of Dominance (D), Influence (I), Steadiness (S) and Conscientiousness (C). The result of the students' test will be explained below:

Based on the diagram above, the highest category that had by the students are conscientiousness with percentage 42 %, then steadiness and conscientiousness 23%, steadiness 19%, influence 10%, dominance 3 %, and dominance and steadiness also 3%.

Learning Style And Disc Test

Based on the diagram below, action-oriented learning preferences in individuals with DISC test results and learning style with the result are Reading-Writing and Conscientiousness with 16%, Kinaesthetic and Influence 6%, Auditory and Steadiness-Conscientiousness 10%, Kinaesthetic and Dominance 3%,

Kinaesthetic and Dominance-Steadiness 3%, Auditory, Reading-Writing and Conscientiousness 3%, Auditory, Reading-Writing and Steadiness-Conscientiousness 3%, Auditory and Conscientiousness 6%, Auditory and Steadiness 13%, Visual and Conscientiousness 3%, Kinaesthetic and Conscientiousness 6%, Auditory, Reading-Writing and Influence 3%, Kinaesthetic and Steadiness 3%, Auditory, Kinaesthetic and Conscientiousness 6%, Kinaesthetic and Steadiness-Conscientiousness 3%, Reading-Writing and Steadiness 3%, Reading-Writing and Conscientiousness, Steadiness 6%.

The Students' Learning Satisfaction

After giving the questionnaire about the students' learning style and interest (DISC Test), The learning satisfactions are divided into five factors, that are teaching method, course content, learning environment, administrative service encounter and learning convenience (Wu et al., 2015). The result of interview session presents the statements of students' learning satisfaction below:

Teaching Method

Teaching method that the author used in teaching was about reading-writing style. It focuses on students reading and writing by giving a narrative text, then the

students' read and analyses the text. After that, students also were given the opportunity to practice their English. When the author asked the students about the students' experience in learning, most students say that the teaching-learning process is pleasant because the teacher is kind and friendly. Some of the students want to read more books and they like the way the teacher taught. But, some students gave a suggestion in teaching that students should be easier in comprehension of studying English.

Course Content

The course content when the students gave some interviews, the students answered that when the teacher explained the material, they enjoyed the material detail and gave some examples to the students so the students understood the material easier, the students also loved when they gave time to discuss with their friends.

Learning Environment

In the learning environment, the students said that they have support from their friends. They also have friends to discuss the material with. When they study with their friends, it makes them happy. Their friends also help the students when they still do not understand.

Administrative Service Encounter

The administrative service encounter, some students said that there is a time to understand the material, but some of them say that it is not enough to understand. The students were also happy when they gave some print out text.

Learning Convenience

Most of the students were happy because they said that the material is easier to understand from what they do not know. The students also do not hesitate because the teacher is friendly in teaching. The students have more challenges in learning.

DISCUSSION

In order to determine the learning style preferences of the students, the author administered a questionnaire to the students. After completing the research, the author categorized and assessed the students' learning styles based on the scores they received using VARK learning style (Fleming, 2006). To identify the learning style indicators, the author referred to a framework for learning styles. The research

results indicate that the dominant learning style among students is reading-writing style. Reading/writing learners prefer to learn through written words, they excel at reading textbooks, taking notes, and writing summaries, they may prefer to read instructions, manuals, and written materials. After conducting the learning style, the author continued to find out the students' interest by using the DISC Test (Wiley, 2013). The most frequently of the DISC Test categories was conscientiousness (C). Conscientiousness contains perfectionist, analytic, very detail-oriented, efficient, private and logical. Students with a high level of conscientiousness (C) tend to have characteristics such as thoroughness, a tendency to try hard, and a focus on quality.

To find out the relationship between students' learning style and interest, the author combined and compared the learning style and interest of the students. It is shown that the highest percentages were Reading-Writing and Conscientiousness. Students who favour the Reading-Writing learning style, preferring to engage with information through reading and writing, often exhibit a strong alignment with conscientiousness characteristics. They tend to have a predisposition for meticulous work, focus on detail, and a strong emphasis on delivering high-quality outcomes. The Reading-Writing style equips them with the means to meticulously plan, organize, and scrutinize learning materials, which harmonizes with the conscientious personality known for its methodical and comprehensive approach to learning and assignments. The combination of the Reading-Writing learning style and thoroughness can result in a profound comprehension and meticulous application of in-depth information within educational and professional contexts.

In light of the understanding of both learning styles and students' interests, the author tried to teach the students based on reading-writing style and conscientiousness. Firstly, the author explained the material and gave the students' a text, after that the students must read the text by themselves and then they analysed the text. After teaching, the author interviewed all of the students. The result of the interview is that the students are happy in the learning process because the teacher was pleasant and friendly so the students do not hesitate to ask. The students also want to read more books. They were happy when they gave the time to discuss each other. They have a chance to discuss the material with their friends and it makes them enjoy learning. In reading-writing, the learning style gives them a tool to plan,

organize and analyze the material and it can be seen when the student is happy to read and ask the text to analyse the material. It corresponds to a conscientious personality that tends to be systematic and in-depth in its approach to learning and tasks. The combination of the Reading-Writing learning style and conscientiousness can lead to a deep understanding and careful application of information in the educational and work processes. On the other hand, students who have that learning style and interest, most students like how the teacher teaches. Hence, it can be concluded that considering students' learning styles and interests, teachers should be engaging, friendly, kind, and possess effective strategies in every teaching process.

CONCLUSION

Referring to the findings and discussion, some conclusions can be formulated as follows: the most frequently used among the students' learning style is reading-writing style. It was the highest-level usage with a percentage of 32%. The students' interest using the DISC Test with the most categories was conscientiousness. It also showed in the combining and mixing the learning style and interest of the students that Reading-Writing learning style and Conscientiousness were the highest. I can conclude that students' interest and learning style has a relation to each other, so when the teacher teaches, they should have a strategy in teaching and also it is better when they know the students' preference of learning style and interest. In addition, teachers must have a strategy in teaching and be friendly so students do not hesitate when they want to ask.

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